

AMERICAN SNIPER By Lorraine Viade, PsyD



American Sniper is another one of those perfect films that only someone like Clint Eastwood can direct. The story is about the most lethal military sniper that served the United States of America. The film is right on target in how piece-by-piece we learn why Chris Kyle was destined to willingly go back again and again to do the things that few people could imagine. *American Sniper* is an intimate look at the heart and mind of a man whose disappointments and disillusion fueled a desire to make something more of his life, to find purpose and meaning in the world. He loved his family but was willing to sacrifice his own happiness for what he believed in. He is the epitome of every service man and woman who puts themselves in harm's way, so that we might feel safer. In the end, the illusion that we can protect everyone by our acts is what courage and heroism are all about.

Bradley Cooper has always delivered good performances. But in this role, he has achieved that defining moment in his career where he transcends from movie star to screen actor. Every moment he is on the screen, he takes charge of the situation emotionally, mentally and physically. His body is transformed into what is required as a Special Operations Navy Seal. But it is in those moments of emotional prowess that Cooper proves he is Oscar worthy. His commitment to the role demonstrates how important it is to be connected to a character, especially one who lived and died a hero. Cooper captures the patriotism, the loyalty and the toll that killing takes – even if it is the enemy. When the enemy is wrapped in the guise of a child, the choice to kill becomes even more difficult. Who will do the necessary evil?

American Sniper is a movie about love of country, family and sacrifice. It is also one of the most ironic stories you will see on the big screen. The impact of it feels like a blow to the brain. How does this happen? Why does this happen? Those who are willing to go to war for those who would never even know how to defend our country deserve our compassion, respect and gratitude. The horrors of war are far removed from our everyday activities and, yet, we know that there are people out there fighting and dying every single day. Let's take time to remember that and to send out a hope and wish for those who fight to return safely.

The wounded warriors that come back to families haunted by the lives they chose to lead and the memories they cannot escape deserve the best treatment we have to offer. Fighting on foreign soil does not diminish the dangers of everyday life here in America

or protect anyone from suffering a fate that seems so inconsistently cruel. How you live your life and how you give your life determine what is left behind in the end. In the case of Chris Kyle, he left a legacy of service to his country that his children can be proud of.

Unpredictable and unexpected, death can come at any time, any place without warning. Even for those who believe in the cause, whether or not the fighting is justified, I don't know if there can be a good war. For the human toll that it takes lasts forever. That toll is the price we as a society pay for the privilege of freedom. It is a debt that will never be forgiven, for it was bought with blood , sweat and tears. Whether or not you believe in going to fight on foreign soil, you cannot deny the noble act of service by these brave people.

I give *American Sniper* five snipers.

